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27 April 1964

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Approved For Release 2003/01/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A007600340001-0

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DAILY BRIEF

*Laos: The political situation remains unresolved.

Leaders of the 19 April coup are continuing to press for cabinet changes. Coup leaders are slated to meet with Premier Souvanna today to discuss re-organization plans.

At a meeting of rightist military leaders held on 26 April, General Kouprasith announced that Souvanna would recall all absent cabinet members to Vientiane. It is not known, however, whether Souvanna has agreed to this plan of action. This stratagem is apparently designed to force the hand of absentee Pathet Lao and left-wing neutralists.

Kouprasith said if the members do not return, their seats would be declared vacant and new individuals named. The coup leaders probably have been braced in their position by Thai Foreign Minister Thanat's statement on 23 April expressing support for the coup and charging Western intervention.

General Phoumi, speaking with the US Ambassador yesterday, indicated he would make efforts to curb any rash action by the coup leaders which might jeopardize the Geneva Agreements. Phoumi's ability to exert pressure, however, appears limited; while he still controls the national purse strings as Minister of Finance, he commands little military support in the Vientiane area.

Nevertheless, General Siho is likely to come under increasing pressure--from rightist elements as well as Western powers--to reach a solution which would keep

the agreements intact. [REDACTED] Siho
might take precipitate and possibly violent action
should he feel himself being driven into a corner
and in danger of "losing face."

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DAILY BRIEF

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South Vietnam: Internal feuding continues to plague the Khanh government.

General Minh, the regime's titular chief of state, recently reiterated to Ambassador Lodge his contention that Khanh lacks popular support. He said Khanh was repeating Diem's errors of making appointments on the basis of loyalty rather than competence, and that the Buddhists were turning against him. Minh's attitude probably has influenced many other officers.

As chief of state, Minh must rule on the appeal of Diem's brother Can for clemency from the death sentence. It is possible that General Khanh may hope that any adverse public reaction to the fate of Can will serve to discredit Minh.

There have been other recent indications of rivalry and distrust among ranking officers in the government. There is no evidence that these internal conflicts represent a serious challenge to Khanh's position, but they are likely to continue to hamper the government in its prosecution of the war.

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Tanganyika-Zanzibar: Both the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council and the Tanganyikan parliament have unanimously approved the articles of union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika without incident.

Zanzibar Foreign Minister Babu, who returned to the island yesterday, has given no hints of his plans. In talks in Nairobi, Babu appeared confident and unperturbed, and seemed to approve the union. He asserted that he had been kept informed of the negotiations and indicated that he would accept a post in the union government.

In Zanzibar, however, there are signs that the pro-Babu elements may be preparing for a fight. Departures of trainees to Cuba and East Germany have been halted and some of Babu's supporters are talking against the union. The US chargé feels that Babu may restrain his hotheaded followers, gambling on his ability to maneuver and his influence over President Karume.

The first contingent of an Ethiopian air transport wing has arrived in Dar-es-Salaam, and more aircraft and personnel were scheduled to come in over the weekend. This will give Tanganyika an air transport capability. The Ethiopian aircraft and crews were requested last January by Tanganyika, along with the Nigerian troops presently in Dar-es-Salaam, to replace British forces in Tanganyika.

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France-Cuba: The French Government has approved a 3-year credit guarantee to Cuba for the sale of 30 locomotives at a cost of \$6 million.

The French Foreign Ministry official who told the US Embassy about the credit was not sure that the Cubans could afford all 30 locomotives. He said his government had been unable to turn down the sale because the locomotive firm, operating below capacity and laying off workers, is in an area where the government is politically weak. He said France was also influenced by the fact that the British had made a similar offer. In February, the French gave a \$10 million credit to Cuba for 300 trucks and tractors.

The French sale will undoubtedly stimulate further Western European interest in trade with Cuba. The US Embassy in Brussels reported on 25 March that the Belgian Government, which refused to guarantee credits for a similar deal, would come under strong attack if the UK or any other NATO government should give such guarantees.

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USSR: Moscow is undertaking a fresh study of the problems of Soviet agriculture, which could lead to fundamental changes.

The study is in the hands of an exceptionally high-level party commission under presidium member Nikolay Podgorny.

It is not clear what reforms may emerge. There may be increased emphasis on state farms at the expense of the collectives and increased wage incentives for farm workers. A Khrushchev memorandum published on 23 April stresses the need for specialization, improvements in management, and the desirability of more intensive use of Western techniques.

The commission will presumably try to avoid recommending large new investments in agriculture. Khrushchev's memorandum indicated that production must be increased with "minimum expenditure."

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NOTES

Congo: Terrorist activities in southeast Kivu Province by a group of self-styled "Mulelists" led by a Kivu provincial assembly deputy may shortly require additional Congo Army troops there.

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the terrorist group is large, with estimates running from "over 1,000" to "several thousand." It is not clear whether this group is receiving encouragement or assistance from the anti-Adoula "Committee of National Liberation" branch in nearby Burundi.

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